

Mono County Collaborative Planning Team

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CPT MINUTES July 26, 2007

Members Present: Chair Hap Hazard, Mono Supervisors; John Eastman, Mammoth Lakes Town Council; Ryan Dermody, Caltrans alternate

Members Absent: Brad Mettam, Caltrans; Chris Plakos, LADWP; Denyse Racine, DFG; Cindi Mitton, Lahontan RWQCB; Charlotte Baker, Bridgeport Indian Colony; Cheryl Probert, USFS/Humboldt-Toiyabe; Marlene Finley, USFS/Inyo

Staff Present: Scott Burns, C.D. Ritter

Guests Present: Lara Kirkner, *Mammoth Times*; Mary Canada, Sierra Business Council; Sally Miller, The Wilderness Society

1. CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE / INTRODUCTIONS

Chair D. Hap Hazard

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: Items of public interest not listed on the agenda.

Mary Canada, Sierra Business Council, reported that SBC's mini-conference on the "State of the Sierra," attracted 60 participants, far more than a lone annual conference. Members from Mammoth Lakes, Lake Isabella, Auburn and Susanville attended. The next mini-conference, addressing forestry, will be held Sept. 10 in Bishop. The museum/visitor center people met at Manzanar. The group has grown, completed a new map, and has developed momentum. The next project planned is for all 20 sites to agree on a theme, with each site having an exhibit. Two new women have brought expertise on museum marketing and curatorship. The target date is spring 2009. The Paiute culture center in Bishop declined to be involved, but maybe could participate in a theme exhibit. The Lone Pine Film Festival created a museum that has become popular in a relatively short time. The Eastern Sierra Cultural and Heritage Alliance map was funded by Inyo and Mono counties, with SBC as a nonprofit sponsor. Canada encouraged attendance at tourism shows as a region, not individual towns. A banner could say: "Visit the Eastern Sierra."

3. MINUTES

No minutes from April 26, 2007, because secretary was in New Zealand.

4. AGENCY ROUNDTABLE

Hap: Incredibly important team, truly disappointed in lack of participation. No other mechanism to share info among agencies.

CT: SAFTYLU ? had new direction with trans planning. Requires blueprint planning, looking at all issues (resources, land use, GIS). Showed map of all ES projects.

Town: USFS important in contributing to visitor centers (Lone Pine & ML), hospital land exchange w/I town limits, in-town property to community lots going on, resolve by month's end. N Village Parking: MMSA staff helpful, hopes to have agreement Reso of Intent to excavate this fall... OMRd wants access to public transportation, periodic neighborhood

coffees for public input... GP update set July 31, lots of pressure to adopt it. 3 meetings/10 days. Threat if council not approve as presented, lawsuits would be filed. Still with 1987 GP. Is update worth \$30 million for bell-shaped parcel? Community coffees could involve county spv partnership. Now it's town staff, not council to avoid level of intimidation by elected officials. Spv wants to expand dialog to communities.

Yosemite: Typical visitation, up a bit in June, Tollefson has been asked by NPS to go to D.C. for a month Centennial Challenge grant funding \$100 million from feds matched by others by 2016 for impv projects, have acting officials. "Tunnel View" area neglected, conc of visitors who want photos. Rehab area, preserve historic character, improve site for better visitor experience. Road impv project on valley loop road not well maintained, road structure deteriorating, lawsuit on Merced River planning process, not widening, just improving road base with new surface, do project in periods of low water. Lightning fires monitored, some with crews on containment. Vulnerability with one of lowest precip figs on record, moisture content in vegetation sig diminished. Events: Yos Gateway Partners 5-hr/day commutes after Ferguson slide last year. Devastating to Mariposa community. YARTS is using shorty buses to fit within length limit on road stretches. Rock shed, tunnel through slide, viaduct across river & around slide, Wild & Scenic River, so issues at play, maintaining free-flowing river. User capacity: plaintiffs lobbying hard for Yos to come up with a number. NPS needs to look at condition of river, resources, visitor experience argued Oct. 10 at 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. Reduce footprint at Yos Lodge, pull lodging units away from river corridor. Lawsuits by Friends of Yos Valley and Mariposans for the Enviro & Responsible Gov. Transpo: Taking on comprehensive transpo plan, spt has approved moving forward, early internal scoping phase now. Grew out of recog of 2002 vision plan 550-car parking area, then satellite buses. Need to look at entire park, not just valley. Move people around better to lessen pressure on valley. How deliver people into park. Funding from fed to have better visitor counting setups to get better handle on who's coming from where, how many people. Milovich: Road safety? KR: Case to judge about failing road systems, fix roads to accommodate more people, butting up against issue of user capacity, had to make strong case to better maintain for people who coming now, not to increase number.

Hap: Factors coming into play: Value of this group is start to see potential. Huge opportunity for CPT to form tight alliance looking at regional transpo, rec, visitors, etc. Website: Glass Creek 3,000 hits in short time. USFS doing niche process to find role in rec, forest mgt. Room for public/private partnerships for recreational opportunities. Larger-scale campground improved to 2007 standards, motorhomes, hookups, etc. Lee Vining Canyon to Tioga gate is most active in park, exceeds all others combined. Huge issue for Mono, CT. Largest number visitors staying outside park. Opportunity to look at how we're handling. Need USFS at table. Look at regional plan for agencies to support each other on upgrades for future. Yellowstone has lanes for pullout for pics, emergency vehicles. Wider, flatter, more open increases speed. Give support to Yosemite to improve roads.

Dulen, Postpile: All transpo needs are linked regionally. Financially unpredictable season, so need long-term financial stabgility. Got grant from FTA. Workshops Aug. 8-11. National team third week in August. Show possible partnerships, get buses to tie in with YARTS, Mono, Inyo, ESTA, etc.

AGENDA ITEM: Continue transportation item, maybe get ESTA rep on CPT. Invite to next meeting.

Mono, Hap: Visioning process in Tri-Valley. Twists and turns not anticipated. Chalfant reluctantly looking at dvp, not encouraging it, want safety impv on hwy, impv at park, fpd, keep it rural with horses, chickens, etc. at country living. CT sponsoring process. Benton indignant at not being included, so now processing Benton-Hammil. Opposite attitude, embracing dvp, downtown ccrridor, infrastr for fire systems, school off hwy, frontage roads not involved with hwy, concerns de water, buildout capacity, want to keep rural qualities intact. Hosp exch: Mono approved purchase docs Monday. Personally struck by historic

nature of authorization to acquire property. Recently 120-yr old courthouse dedicated. Hosp property has been dream on table for 30+ yr. Long-term testament to providing services to town and county. Commitment to change, similar to incorp of ML. Moving ahead at fast pace. Rodeo Grounds (Scott: 90 acres pvt land for resort node. Owner at doorstep several years with app. Few items awaited yet. Submittal within weeks, public scoping. Hap: Hot Creek closed due to geothermal activity. Ask for actively monitoring, reopen ASAP. Lots of pressure on hot tubs, resource damage, parking probs, cutting across meadows, upgrading roads to tubs, walking paths, boardwalks, etc. See focus on getting it reopened. Mono has tackled fire issues in low-water year. Gain brush clearance compliance, waiving fees at tx stations to haul away brush, how fund landfills w/o losing revenue that supports them, high fire danger, want communities to be safe... South Mono: N Inyo hosp dist exploring annexation of S. Mono communities (Swall, Paradise, Tri-Valley) through LAFCO process. Currently not part of Mammoth hosp dist, thought use N Inyo.

5. ANNUAL CROP & LIVESTOCK REPORT

George Milovich, agricultural commissioner

Agave/tequila vision up 395 corridor, 7-yr process, realize it's all LADWP land not to be sold. Crops are carrots, garlic, onion and potatoes. Water runoff stats: one of lowest after two record years of good moisture. Another dry year would be a concern. Ag commissioner promotes ag, biggest single economic factor in CA. John: Alfalfa loss of 400 tons stacked, several thou acres dry-grazing land. If divest herd, lose cows that know where water is. Keep older herd that knows. Elk land? Was on east side, but rancher of 1,000 acres of alfalfa with gravity flow from Big Pine. 600-lb elk bend fence post right over, lease from LADWP. Grow more feed on east side, elk on west side. Herd is so big will issue 78 tags this year. Elk more of grazer like cattle than browser like deer. Hap: Emerging wine industry in Tri-Valley, alpacas too. Every part of animal usable. Geo:

6. REPORT ON DEVILS POSTPILE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Deanna Dulen, superintendent

NPS likes visitor surveys on service, resource quality. Academically sound, peer reviewed. Grant last summer for DPP survey: demographics, trip visits, trip characteristics, mgt of monument, shuttle. Report available online. 376 questionnaires, 75% response rate with reminder postcard. 85% from CA, balance from other states, 6% international. Came to ML to go to DPP: 28%. 47% came to ML, then found out about DPP. Random surveys. 95% very satisfied with services. First time open by Memorial since 1972. Early opening, no shuttle. 500 cars Saturday. People parked everywhere. Sunday had 600 cars, maxed to capacity, parked everywhere, gridlock. Closed road at noon, 200 cars turned away. Proof that shuttle allows greater access. 54% thought reduces congestion, 40% saw park resources protection. May not always fund shuttle system, not allowed to go deficit. So much trouble with shuttles, tried different plans. Might consider other alternatives. Free-for-all not good for safety, resource damage. Three options: 1) continue shuttle (waiting 30 min), minimizes road congestion, during peak season entrance is guaranteed. (90% wanted). 2) Rsv system (4% favored) up to 500 vehicles: no waiting during peak, reduces congestion on roads & parking areas. Con: Entrance not guaranteed during peak. 3) First-come, first-served (4% favored) up to 250 in valley. Waiting 30 min, max congestion, entrance not guaranteed during peak. Next step is financial viability assessment. Pub/pvt partnerships for grants. FTA likes this area. Do good job with study, show partnership. Keep cost affordable to general public. 75% families in peak season. Ryan: Gondola to valley? DD: Workshops in 2004, but cost prohibitive. Steep grade. Look at cleaner, greener, quieter buses. Look at bus size, hybrids.

7. YOSEMITE'S TUOLUMNE RIVER PLAN/TUOLUMNE MEADOWS PLAN

Kristina Rylands, NPS project manager/divisinn of planning

Wild & Scenic River comprehensive Mgt. Plan. New part of planning process, involving people in creation of plan. Have stakeholders, park partners, public, interested parties in planning process. Why can't it just be like it was in "good old days." Camp as long, wherever

even no camping spots. Experience wildlife: Rangers take Curry garbage to be tossed to bears. Today never allow that kind of activity. Learn lessons, make things better for future generations. River planning: Laws and policies, comments. 1968 Wild and Scenic Act not put velvet rope around it. Keep in free-flowing condition, protect visitor access. Manage parks 1916 Organic Act. Tuol wild and scenic 1984. Hetch Hetchy not part cuz blocks flow. Steepest trail in Yosemite to section of river. Plan answer why important, what need to protect. No recreational segments on T. w&scenic. Meadows plan: 2006 public scoping What love about T river and meadows, what like to see protected, svc and facilities to offer, improve, remove; what like to do there. Walking tours, site visits. Got hundreds of comments analyzed into 1k discrete indiv comments. Report released 12/06. Don't turn T into Yos Val; T is portal to wilderness; fix whaty needs fixing, otherwise leave it alone; natural but accessible. Internal and public workshop last winter. Planner-for-a-day workshops. T planning workbook shares range of ideas. Not fully formulated, need more comments on concepts. Four concepts: 1) wilderness even not now designated such; 2) maximize opportunities for use while allowing restoration; 4) emphasis on protecting historic character; 4) natural resource restoration? Centerfold is comment sheet to submit. Deadline: sept. 15. Reopening scoping. Stand down on river at end of 07, focus on mdws. Done by 09... Socioeconomics workshop in September for gateway communities: Groveland this time.

8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING: Thursday, September 27, 2007, at 9 a.m.

9. ADJOURN

*NOTE: Start times are only tentative. Although CPT generally strives to follow the agenda as scheduled, it reserves the right to take any agenda item, in any order, and at any time after its meeting starts. The CPT encourages public attendance and participation; however, the only way to ensure that you are present for a particular agenda item is to attend the meeting from the time it starts until that agenda item is actually taken up.